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CROCKETT, ANDREW
(1745-1821)
PAPERS
1778-1888

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INTRODUCTION

The papers of Andrew Crockett (1745-1821), blacksmith, cattleman, farmer, gunsmith, land speculator, and soldier, span the years 1778 to 1888. The Andrew Crockett Papers were placed on deposit by J. Crockett Knox, George R. Knox, III, and William H. Knox, Jr., of Nashville, Tennessee.

The materials in this finding aid measure 1.26 linear feet. There are no restrictions on the materials.

Single photocopies of unpublished writings in the Andrew Crockett Papers may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Andrew Crockett Papers, containing approximately eight hundred items and ten volumes, span the years 1778 to 1888. The collection is composed of accounts (bills, notes, and receipts); account books; correspondence; land records; legal documents; military records and some miscellaneous items.

Blacksmithing was one of several business enterprises of Andrew Crockett in both Wythe County, Virginia, and in Williamson County, Tennessee. Records of his business consist of customer's accounts and iron purchase orders. In 1815, this trade was conveyed to his son James Crockett.

Most prominent among other accounts are those concerning Andrew Crockett's land interests, of which those in Kentucky played a major role. These records include legal fees and charges for land surveys. Among these papers is a bill signed by Henry Clay which is dated February 13, 1798. Involved was a land dispute in Fayette County, Kentucky, in which title to some 5,416 acres was at stake. Of the ten account books which are dated 1779 to 1819 is one which contains a "Cyphering Book" prepared in 1790 by Samuel Crockett, III (1772-1827), son of Andrew Crockett. The remaining accounts are those relating to the purchase of household items, agricultural equipment and supplies.

Correspondence for the years 1795 to 1888 is primarily incoming correspondence addressed to either Andrew Crockett, James Crockett, Andrew's son, or to Martha E. Crockett, wife of James Crockett. Six of the earlier letters, dated 1804 to 1820, were written by Andrew Crockett to various recipients and deal mainly with his lawsuits involving Kentucky lands. Letters from other members of the Crockett family consist largely of family news and agricultural conditions in Williamson County and Crockett County, Tennessee.

Most of the correspondence is for the period 1870 to 1888. Families prominently mentioned in this period include the Baldrige family of Maury City, Crockett County, Tennessee; the Eddins family of Lebanon, Wilson County, Tennessee; the Gaines family of Oxford, Lafayette County, Mississippi; and the Neal family of Maury City and Johnson's Grove, Crockett County, Tennessee. Interesting data on the climate and gold and silver mining in the Colorado Rockies is to be found in the letters of Dr. D. Mortimore, one-time family physician for the James Crockett family, who migrated from Tennessee to Colorado in the 1870s. Correspondence by other members of the Crockett family during this time include the letters of Eliza Crockett, daughter of James Crockett who married Thomas H. Eddins, and by Augusta Bell Crockett, daughter of James Bell Crockett, who married William H. Knox in 1895.

The collection provides a great deal of information on the settlement of western lands in the post Revolutionary War period, particularly for the area south of the Ohio River which would be organized as Kentucky and Tennessee. Following the natural routes into the interior and the trails blazed earlier by the long hunters, pioneer settlers would include many Revolutionary War soldiers. These officers and soldiers of the Continental Line

often held state-issued warrants entitling them to claim specified tracts of western lands. Among the war veterans with military grants was Andrew Crockett of Wythe County, Virginia.

Land grants in 1784 and 1785 to Andrew Crockett from the Commonwealth of Virginia for acreage in Fayette County and Lincoln County, Kentucky, are probably the basis for his earliest claims there. Following additional grants, by 1798 his total holdings in several Kentucky counties would surpass 10,000 acres. Unfortunately, as was true of so many land surveys in this period, the use of inexact boundaries left much to be desired and contributed to numerous boundary disputes many of which were brought into the state and federal courts. Land in Mason County, Kentucky, was at issue in Andrew Crockett's suit against General Henry "Light-Horse Harry" Lee, former Governor of Virginia, in an action which was initiated in 1812, and in a later suit (1818-1821) against John Lashbrookes.

While expanding his Kentucky land holdings, Andrew Crockett was also interested in the Cumberland region. On April 17, 1786, he received two military grants of six hundred forty acres each from the State of North Carolina for land in Davidson (later Williamson) County. A third grant in Davidson County for one hundred six acres was assigned to Andrew Crockett by Colonel Martin Armstrong on October 8, 1787.

Land records which document Andrew Crockett's various land ventures consist of deeds, entries, grants, and surveys which involve a number of Kentucky counties – primarily Fayette and Lincoln. Prominent among the officials whose signatures appear on Kentucky land grants are James Garrard, Benjamin Harrison, and Patrick Henry. Also included is the deed dated April 17, 1816, to the Crockett family farm near Brentwood in Williamson County, Tennessee, from Andrew Crockett to his son James Crockett.

Legal documents are primarily those associated with the Kentucky land suits with the John Lashbrookes case and the one involving General Henry Lee being of greatest importance. Bills of sale for negroes, contracts, court decrees and summonses, lawsuits, military service pensions, promissory notes, surety bonds, and other documents are included.

Military records for the years 1790 to 1798 consist of a return of Captain Andrew Porter's Company in the Second Battalion of the Thirty-second Regiment of Virginia Militia for 1790 and the division list of Captain John T. Sayer's Company in the Second Battalion of the Thirty-fifth Regiment of Militia from Wythe County, Virginia, dated April 7, 1798. Wythe County, Virginia, records show that Andrew Crockett served as a militia officer in that county where he was appointed Captain on September 11, 1790, and Mayor on September 7, 1797.

James Crockett, son of Andrew Crockett, served as a private in Captain David Mason's Company of United States Rangers during the War of 1812. This service entitled his widow to a service pension of eight dollars per month beginning on March 9, 1878. Martha E. Crockett's pension application and supporting papers dated December 11, 1878, are included in the collection.

Receipts dated 1788 and 1821 are primarily tax receipts for levies paid by Andrew Crockett on land owned by Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia. Most of the Kentucky receipts are for lands in Clark, Fayette, and Mason Counties. Tennessee tax receipts are for direct, state, county, and poor taxes paid by Andrew Crockett in Williamson County for the years 1813 to 1816. Miscellaneous receipts dated 1840 to 1878 are for James Crockett or for Martha E. Crockett.

Miscellaneous items found in the collection are clippings, lists, notes, notices, and printed material which includes patent medicine advertisements, a fragmentary account of the Aaron Burr conspiracy, and some proceedings of the Virginia legislature. Writings include an essay by George Bill on "Envy" dated November 19, 1828; a composition on "DeWitt Clinton and the Canals;" a speech on the qualities of DeWitt Clinton and Alexander Hamilton; and verses by John Martin dated March 13, 1812.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Andrew Crockett

- 1745 Born in Augusta (now Wythe) County, Virginia, the seventh child of Samuel and Esther (Thompson) Crockett
Owned tract of land along Reed Creek in Wythe County known as “Purgatory Tract”
Pursued trade as a gunsmith, blacksmith, and cattleman in southwestern Virginia and Kentucky
Married Sallie (Sarah) Elliott (1750-1821) of Prince Edward County, Virginia
- 1777-1779 Served as Second Lieutenant in the Montgomery County, Virginia, Militia
- 1784 Granted 2,651 acres of land in Fayette and Lincoln Counties, Kentucky
- 1785 Granted 5,416 acres of land in Fayette County, Kentucky
- 1786 April 17, received two grants of 640 acres of land each in Davidson County, Tennessee
- 1787 October 8, granted 106 acres of land in Davidson County, North Carolina
- 1790 September 11, appointed Captain of Wythe County, Virginia, Militia
- 1797 September 7, appointed Major of Virginia Militia
- 1798 Granted 2,400 acres of land in Fayette County, Kentucky
- 1799 Moved with his family to Davidson (now Williamson) County, Tennessee, near Brentwood
- 1800 Established as a farmer, gunsmith, and blacksmith in Williamson County, Tennessee
Lands in Kentucky involved in a series of lawsuits in state and federal courts. Henry Clay served as attorney for Crockett until about 1812.
- 1815 Sold blacksmith business to his son James Crockett and built a new house on Wilson Pike about two and a half miles south of Brentwood, Williamson County, Tennessee
- 1821 May 28, died and was buried in the Crockett family cemetery near Brentwood, Tennessee

CONTAINER LIST

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8. Correspondence – Neal, J. – Neal, S.
9. Correspondence – Neal, W.Z. – Nicholas
10. Correspondence – Parham – Sheffey
11. Correspondence – Soule – Wickliffe
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